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Seeking Expert Advice

03.26.2008 | Business, International, Students

The star power of global business leaders gathered at the University of Dayton this week attracted two college students from halfway around the world.

Dilip Shankar, 18, and Kshitij Gopal, 20, stamped their tickets to the University of Dayton's RISE VIII Global Student Investment Forum after winning a Mindful Leadership Competition sponsored by UD and Loyola Institute of Business Administration in India.

The pair are just two of the 2,300 students, faculty and investment professionals from 257 universities in 69 countries attending the three-day forum.

Shankar, a first-year student at Vivekananda College pursuing a bachelor of commerce degree, wanted to attend RISE so he could listen to and mingle with some of the world's most influential business leaders and learn from their experiences.

The aspiring accountant wrote his essay on how businesses should operate in an ethical manner.

"Businesses must uphold human rights, be very eco-friendly and, obviously, businesses need to compete with each other, but in no way should they be involved in corrupt practices," he said.

Gopal, a third-year student at Vellore Institute of Technology pursuing a mechanical engineering degree, said he's come to RISE looking for solutions to one of India's educational difficulties.

Despite Indian universities graduating more than one million technical graduates a year, he said, Indian businesses are finding that graduates are not prepared for the realities of the workforce and economy ¿ they are not "industry ready."

"I hope to listen to these business leaders and see where the emphasis is being laid and where the money needs to be spent to prepare students," Gopal said.

The students' arrival in Dayton on Sunday marked Gopal's first trip to the U.S. Shankar has been once before to visit family in Washington, D.C. Both said they were impressed by the culture they found at UD.

"The campus is very student-inclusive," Gopal said. "Students are allowed, even encouraged, to take part in the activities at the university. This is a big difference from India where there is a clear distinction between what students do, what faculty do and what the staff do."

Their schedules in the days leading up to the RISE forum on Thursday included a campus tour, meetings with University departments, a trip to the Air Force museum and an opportunity to sit in during a class.

RISE has become the world's largest student investment forum attracting students, faculty and professionals from around the country to interact with some of the most influential and respected financial leaders in the world. The event is modeled after the World Economic Forum held annually in Davos, Switzerland and gives students a chance to ask questions of some of the top professionals in the world.

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